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ABSTRACT

Terrorism stirs up intense reactions of horror, confusion, sadness, fear, and anger. In the coming months, children and adults alike will be struggling to find meaning for the disaster that befell America on September 11, 2001. This curriculum is about the destructive nature of hatred and wrongful attribution. The curriculum stresses that many students may need help in making refined judgments about who is and who is not to blame, about who is an ally, who is a friend, and who has earned anger and hostility. The curriculum's lessons are designed to help students address these issues and to support their exploration of justice and right. The curriculum can be used as a follow-on to the many fine programs that already exist for addressing trauma and emotional distress. It is divided into the following sections: "Preface"; "Gauging Your Readiness and Preparing To Teach These Lessons"; "Introduction"; "Lesson 1: What Is Justice? What Is the Injustice Here?"; "Lesson 2: Has the Past Been Just?"; "Lesson 3: How Can You Prevent Injustice?"; "Moving Beyond Blame"; "Additional Resources"; "Acknowledgments"; and "Handouts" (n=6). (Includes 23 endnotes.) (BT)

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beyond blame

Reacting to the terrorist attack

A curriculum for middle and high school students

SO 032 971

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Education Development Center, Inc.
The Justice Project
Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation

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Beyond Blame: Reacting to the Terrorist Attack

Beyond Blame: Reacting to the Terrorist Attack is dedicated to the victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11th and their families—
as well as to everyone who has participated in the rescue efforts.

A note to educators: This curriculum was developed within one week of the terrorist attack, and as a work in progress it is subject to revision. If you have suggestions and feedback about the use of this curriculum please email us at beyondblame@edc.org.

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Preface

In our anger and emotion, our fellow Americans must treat each other with respect.
—President George W. Bush

As teachers, we must create a culture of bonding and move away from a culture of blame and shame.
—Santiago Wood, Superintendent, Fresno Unified School District

What do we tell the children? We tell them the truth. How we do that telling will depend on the youngsters' ages and maturity, but even the littlest among them know that something terrible has happened. To express nothing teaches a savage lesson in unconcern.
—Theodore Sizer, Founder of The Coalition of Essential Schools

In the next weeks and months, children and adults alike will be struggling to find meaning for the disaster that befell America on September 11, 2001. Whom will we blame, and what will be the boundaries of our response? When emotions are so raw and a nation is so inconsolable, can we keep our communities from developing an unbounded hatred? What must children think when they see television coverage of foreign communities that celebrate our collective grief?

If we condemn those who blame any and all Americans for their own perceived grievances, we must not ourselves commit the same despicable act of misplaced blame. While the agencies of our government are making every attempt to identify the individuals and organizations responsible for this heinous act, we must be careful not to sow the seeds of hatred toward innocent groups. *Beyond Blame* is about the destructive nature of hatred and wrongful attribution. It is about helping the next generation reflect and react in ways that they will be able to look back on without regret.

As educators, we understand that children are still developing the skills they need to bring order to new events. In making sense of America's quest to attribute blame for the terrorism we have suffered, many students may need help in making refined judgments about who is—and who is not—to blame. Who is an ally, who is a friend, and who has earned our anger and hostility are all complex questions. These lessons are designed to help students address these issues and to support their exploration of justice and right.

We have sought to create a program that can be used as a follow-on to the many fine programs that already exist for addressing trauma and emotional distress. Education Development Center, Inc., has a long history of work in humanitarian law, social justice, and the prevention of hate crimes and violence. We hope that the lessons in this mini-curriculum will help educators and other caring adults move children to the "next step" in what will undoubtedly be a long-term process of coming to terms with a tragedy that may have changed this nation forever.

Gauging Your Readiness and Preparing to Teach These Lessons

Terrorism stirs up intense reactions of horror, confusion, sadness, fear, and anger—in all of us. Before teachers can be expected to turn the events into a "teachable moment" for students, they must judge their own readiness to teach and the readiness of their students to learn.

Preparing Yourself

- Address your own shock and grief in response to the attack. The American Psychological Association has created a helpful resource for adults about the September 11 attack, available on-line at http://helping.apa.org/daily/traumaticstress.html.
- In a time of crisis, our own fears and prejudices can surface, often taking us by surprise. You may want to reflect on these issues and perhaps discuss them with a trusted colleague or friend before teaching the lessons. You may also have had past experiences of belonging to a group that was (wrongly) blamed for an event. This is a time to be aware of those experiences and the thoughts and feelings they reawaken.
- Read carefully through the background materials and lesson plans and brush up on your knowledge of the incidents. Think about the kinds of questions students are likely to ask and your possible responses. This guide provides several Internet resources that can help.

Preparing Your Students

- If you have not already allowed time for students to talk about their emotional reactions to the tragedies, please do not rush to proceed with these lessons. Before going further, we recommend that you use one of the guidelines on talking to young people after a tragedy, such as the one developed by the American Psychiatric Association (available on-line at http://www.psych.org/public_info/childrentragedy.cfm).
- It is up to you to judge the readiness of your students to move forward with these lessons. If your students are unusually volatile, acting out, or showing signs of traumatic stress, wait until you feel they are ready. Pace your class; do not process reason before emotion. Be aware that some of your students and/or their family members may belong to stigmatized groups and may feel more directly affected or vulnerable as a result. Be thoughtful about how these issues may enter your discussions.

Extreme events can precipitate extreme responses, ones that may be beyond the training and expertise of parents and professional educators. All adults who work with children need to be able to recognize signs that *may* be indicative of additional needs, and should be prepared to make referrals and/or identify resources that can address those needs. (For more information on coping with grief or trauma, see Additional Resources.)

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Introduction

On September 11, 2001, four jet aircraft were hijacked from three different cities in the United States. The terrorists, who reportedly took over piloting the craft, had apparently planned suicide missions to crash these planes into important locations along the East Coast. The first two planes to crash hit the World Trade Center towers in New York City. The next plane targeted Washington, D.C., and crashed into the Pentagon, our national defense center. The fourth plane disappeared from radar and then crashed near Pittsburgh; it is believed to have been headed for either the White House or Camp David, the presidential retreat. All passengers aboard the aircraft and more than 5,000 people who worked in the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon are now presumed dead (as of September 16, 2001). The towers and Building Seven of the World Trade Center completely collapsed, causing destruction to a large part of the tip of lower Manhattan. Across America, all air travel stopped, our borders were reinforced, thousands of buildings were evacuated, and schools and businesses closed. The United States launched immediate police and military activity to try to prevent further acts of terrorism and to determine who was behind these horrible mass murders.

Thousands of people—those who died or were wounded and those who loved them—are direct victims of the attack itself. Now, radio talk shows and other media indicate that there may be a second wave of victims: Arab Americans, Muslims, and others who appear to be of the same ethnic or religious background as the suspects, but who are innocent of any wrongdoing. In short, many people are now the innocent targets of blame, anger, isolation, and violence.

We were not able to protect the first group of victims from harm. We can help prevent harm to the second group.

Beyond Blame provides lesson plans for three class sessions in which students in grades 6–12 can explore the consequences of mislaid blame in terms of basic concepts of justice. (If time permits, you may want to have students brainstorm a class definition of justice and injustice.)* Each lesson is based on questions about justice (and injustice) that lead to individual student responsibility:

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* Basic concepts of justice often come down to fairness. Younger students may understand justice as:

- Treating everyone the same, regardless of their nationality, race, or religion
- Not punishing people for crimes they have not committed.
- Punishing the people who have committed the crimes.

Older students might understand that, in addition, American concepts of justice include:

- Not punishing people for their beliefs.

With the youngest students, you may want to substitute the terms "fair" and "fairness" for "just" and "justice." We suggest that you allow students to articulate their own concepts of what is just—or fair—as they debate the concrete events, rather than present definitions yourself. Asking such questions will enable you to see students' theories of justice and to apply them later to the events under consideration.

- Lesson 1: What Is Justice? What Is the Injustice Here?
- Lesson 2: Has the Past Been Just?
- Lesson 3: How Can You Prevent Injustice?

Goals for Students

- To be introduced to the concept of "misplaced" or "group blame"—blaming entire groups for the actions of a few
- To know the consequences that can come from blaming an entire group
- To understand that members of any ethnic or religious group do not necessarily share the same beliefs, in this case, beliefs about the use of terrorism
- To build ideas of what one can do to reduce the consequences of mislaid blame and to protect the people vulnerable to it

Age and Grade Level

We consider the central topic of this mini-curriculum—the blaming of a whole group for the misdeeds of a few, and how to prevent it—to be appropriate for the full age range from grade 6 to grade 12. Teachers can adapt the materials to grade level by group reading or reading aloud, when necessary, for younger students, and by providing more complex examples, assignments, and supplementary materials for older or more advanced students. In many cases, this central topic will be reflected in students' current courses in literature, social studies, or history, and, if so, good examples can be drawn from those courses.

Classroom Time

The three lessons can take one or several sessions, depending on the number of students in the class, the amount of student participation, and the depth to which you examine each of the questions.

Lesson 1: What Is Justice? What Is the Injustice Here?

Objectives for Students

- To have a common base of information about the attack
- To have a safe space in which to express their emotions about the attack
- To be aware that some people are being targeted out of anger or revenge simply because they share an ethnicity or religion with the terrorist attackers

Materials

Handout A: A Summary and Timeline of the Terrorist Attack
Handout B: Reports of Incidents Following the Terrorist Attack

Activities

1. Discussing the Attack
Read to the class a report of the terrorist attack, acknowledging that most everyone knows about it but that you are reading this to provide a shared base of information. (You may wish to use the report and timeline provided in Handout A.)

Ask, "What are you feeling about this incident?"

Allow students to express their feelings about the attack. If, here or later, names of groups, such as "Muslims," come up, you might simply ask, "*All* Muslims?" and then bookmark/reserve further discussion of specific groups for Lessons 2 or 3.

Ask, "Why do people feel so angry?"

Have students brainstorm reasons. The most obvious reasons will come quickly, but it is useful to continue further, even waiting through some silences, until a fuller, more complete list of reasons is expressed.

2. Examining Attacks that Have Followed the Terrorist Attack
Ask, "Have you heard any instances of people taking out their anger on other people who are innocent of the crime?"

After students say what they have heard, present Handout B: Reports of Incidents Following the Terrorist Attack. Have students read the excerpts.

Ask, "What do the people who were attacked after the terrorist attack seem to have in common?"
(Although the victims of attacks include children and adults, Christians and Muslims, Arab Americans and immigrants, all the victims were assumed to be Arabs or Muslims.)

3. Writing Assignment

Have students write on any or all of the following questions:

- Why would people blame all members of an ethnic or religious group for the actions of a few?
- Is this just or right? Why or why not? Give reasons and examples.
- Where else have you seen group blame happen in your own life?
- Where have you come across it in a book or a movie?

Lesson 2: Has the Past Been Just?

Objectives for Students

- To examine another time when, as a result of an act of violence, an entire ethnic group was mistreated*
- To know some of the consequences of blaming an entire group for the actions of a few

Materials

Handout C: In Another Time
Handout D: People Who Helped
Handout E: Epilogue

Activities

1. Examining an Incident from Our Own History
Distribute Handout C: In Another Time.

Read, or have students read, the background on the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Ask:

- What assumptions about Japanese Americans, as a group, has the speaker made?
- What fears does the speaker encourage?

Have students take turns reading to the class the story excerpts in Handout C (under "The Evacuation," "The Camps," and "The Impact on Japanese Businesses and Farms").

Explore the stories with these questions:

- Following the attack, what were the prevailing attitudes about people of Japanese ancestry?
- How did it unfold that we started to turn against these people because of the country that they—or, more often, their ancestors—came from?
- What were the consequences for these people?
  (Schooling was disrupted; families were broken up; homes, gardens, and pets were left behind; incomes were destroyed; businesses, homes, farms, and possessions were sold at a loss; their sense of vulnerability and of not belonging increased dramatically; etc.)
- What's alike and what's different about the situation today?
  (While there are important differences from the perspective of international politics—i.e., the Pearl Harbor attack was by one nation on the armed forces of another nation—the situation within our country is similar in at least one important way: A violent incident is being followed by persecution of [innocent] people of the same ethnic or religious group as the perpetrators or suspects.)

* The purpose of this lesson is to explore the analogy of misplaced blame. This is not about relating the two attacks.

2. Exploring the Possibility of Protection and Support
Ask, "Did anyone support or protect the Japanese Americans?"

Brainstorm and list answers to these questions:
- What were the needs of the people who had been interned?
- What social pressures might have influenced people to help or not help?

Distribute Handout D: People Who Helped and give the following homework assignment:

> Write a short story or a brief scene about one of these helping incidents. Be sure that your story shows, through action, the conflicts within each character's mind around giving or receiving help.
>
> OR
>
> Create a poem, song, painting, or drawing about the things that were left behind.

3. Looking at the Aftermath
Distribute Handout E: Epilogue and read it to the class, or have students read it aloud or to themselves.

Ask:
- What were the long-term consequences for the Japanese Americans?
  (Some are noted in Handout E.)
- What were the long-term consequences for the United States?
  (The realization that even a great nation can make mistakes; a precedent for how not *to treat U.S. citizens and residents)*

Lesson 3: How Can You Prevent Injustice?

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

—Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl

Objectives for Students

- To consider examples of groups that are now at risk for group blame and to identify the factors or events that might trigger it
- To examine their own experiences with violence, group blame, and stereotyping—as perpetrators, bystanders, or victims
- To understand that young people have a role to play in preventing violence and hatred in the world and ensuring justice
- To feel empowered to act as individuals and as a group to prevent misplaced blame and to promote justice

Materials

Handout F: Not Allowed / Not Cool / Cool

Activities

1. Who Is at Risk Today

Ask:

- Who is at risk today of misplaced blame, prejudice, or violence?
  (Possible answers include Arabs; Muslims; people who look like Arabs/Muslims; immigrants; foreign visitors; Jews/Israelis, who are blamed by some for our involvement in the Middle East conflict; Americans in other countries; all members of minority groups)
- Thinking about the experiences of the Japanese Americans during World War II, can you imagine such events unfolding today? Who (what group or groups) might this happen to?
- Are Americans at risk today? Was the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon an example of group blame?
  (Students may have said this in response to the first question, given that the United States was the victim of a vicious terrorist attack. If not, be sure to make this point.)
- How can individuals respond to the terrorist attacks in a way that doesn't perpetuate misplaced blame or prejudice?

2. Examining Possible Responses to This Attack

Distribute Handout F: Not Allowed / Not Cool / Cool to your students. Tell students that the first list ("What is NOT ALLOWED") identifies behaviors that, despite one's personal views, are against the law—violence, destruction of property, harassment, etc. The second list ("What is NOT COOL") identifies attitudes and beliefs that are protected under freedom of speech but which potentially contribute to a climate of hatred, conflict, and misplaced blame. The third list ("What is COOL") suggests some positive actions one can take.

Give students time to read through the lists and relate them to their own experiences or actions. Ask them to answer the questions after each list as they examine which things they have experienced, witnessed, or done.

After students have completed their lists, ask for some volunteers to share their reactions. Help them connect their personal experiences with the way potential victims might feel right now.

3. What Can We Do Next?

Ask:

- How have I contributed—for better or worse—to justice in my school, community, country, or world?
- What can I do now and in the future?

Have students brainstorm possible actions they might take (1) as individuals and (2) as a group. Here are some ideas to use as prompts, if needed:

- Write letters to survivors of violence or to family members of victims who lost their lives.
- Create drawings, posters, poetry, stories, songs, performances, etc. that take a stand against group-blaming behavior.
- Act politically—write letters to political leaders or your local paper expressing your views on this issue, etc.

Moving Beyond Blame

These lessons are only a start. This discussion will have stimulated students' thinking about the immediate and long-lasting effects of group blame and backlash. Many students, especially older ones, may feel particularly motivated to act in response to the tragedies and to prevent their escalation. Below are a few suggestions for integrating learning with activism:

- Organize a class or school project to support victims and their families.
- Have students research news stories of attacks against minority groups in response to the terrorist tragedy by collecting and analyzing news clippings or Internet printouts that portray unjust or unfounded sentiments, statements, or attacks.
- Have students collect accounts of protective and supportive acts toward Arab Americans or Muslims.
- Create a class mission statement about responding to one's fellow citizens in a productive way. (This can be an opportunity to brainstorm and model consensus-building.)
- Assign an essay comparing contemporary events to analogous tragedies in history.
- Dedicate an hour every week or month for students to locate and read publications written for largely minority audiences (e.g., *Asian Week, Hispanic Review, Black Enterprise, Indian Country Today).*
- Work with interested students to form a Student Civil Rights Team in your school. (Student Civil Rights Teams work in schools or other settings to teach their peers about prejudice, discrimination, hate crimes, and protecting victims or potential victims.)

Additional Resources

Lesson 1

There are numerous news stories on the September 11 attack. Here is one age-appropriate news source: http://teacher.scholastic.com/newszone/news/index.asp.

A good source of some background information is *The World Religions* by Huston Smith, available on-line at http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0062508113/ref%3Dpd%5Frhf%5Fp%5F2/103-4171452-63798/104-1556320-1945542.

The National Council of the Social Studies is offering on its Web site "Teaching About Tragedy," a free information service designed to assist teachers in helping their students cope with, and make sense of, the senseless: http://www.socialstudies.org.

Lesson 2

Additional information on the Nisei experience is available on the Children of the Camps Web site: http://www.children-of-the-camps.org/history/.

Two additional curriculum resources you may want to review:

- *Changing Perspectives on the Japanese Internment Experience,* available on-line at http://www.thirteen.org/wnetschool/origlessons/internment/.
- *The Internment Camp Class Kit,* available on-line at http://www.njahs.org/Education/camp_kit.htm.

Lesson 3

Here are two excellent resources:

- *Healing the Hate: A National Bias Crime Prevention Curriculum for Middle Schools,* available on-line at http://www.edc.org/HHD/hatecrime/id3_m.htm.
- *The Co/Motion Guide to Youth-Led Social Change,* available on-line at http://www.afj.org/pubs.html.

Helping Children Cope with Grief or Trauma

American Psychiatric Association
http://www.psych.org/public_info/childrentragedy.cfm

American Psychological Association, "Warning Signs of Trauma-Related Stress"
http://www.apa.org/practice/ptsd.html

American Red Cross, "Helping Young Children Cope with Trauma"
http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/childtrauma.html

National Association of School Psychologists, "Crisis and Loss: Information for Educators"
http://www.naspcenter.org/pdf/bbcqcrisiseducator.pdf

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Partners

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The Justice Project
The Justice Project is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to fighting injustice and to creating a more humane and just world. The Justice Project was founded by Vietnam Veterans who have been joined by like-minded women and men to extend the reach of justice.
http://www.thejusticeproject.org

Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF)
VVAF is an international humanitarian organization that addresses the causes, conduct, and consequences of war through its rehabilitation projects for victims of war, its landmine survey projects, and its public education and advocacy programs.
http://www.vvaf.org

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Handouts

Lesson 1: What Is Justice? What Is the Injustice Here?

Handout A: A Summary and Timeline of the Terrorist Attack

On September 11, 2001, four jet aircraft were hijacked from three different cities in the United States. The terrorists, who reportedly took over piloting the craft, had apparently planned suicide missions to crash these planes into important locations along the East Coast. The first two planes to crash hit the World Trade Center towers in New York City. The next plane targeted Washington, D.C., and crashed into the Pentagon, our national defense center. The fourth plane disappeared from radar and then crashed near Pittsburgh; it is believed to have been headed for either the White House or Camp David, the presidential retreat. All passengers aboard the aircraft and more than 5,000 people who worked in the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon are now presumed dead (as of September 16, 2001). The towers and Building Seven of the World Trade Center completely collapsed, causing destruction to a large part of the tip of lower Manhattan. Across America, all air travel stopped, our borders were reinforced, thousands of buildings were evacuated, and schools and businesses closed. The United States launched immediate police and military activity to try to prevent further acts of terrorism and to determine who was behind these horrible mass murders.

8:45 a.m. A hijacked jet crashes into the north tower of the World Trade Center skyscraper in New York City.

9:03 a.m. A second hijacked jet crashes into the south tower of the World Trade Center and explodes. Both buildings—each 110 stories tall—are burning.

9:43 a.m. A third hijacked passenger jet crashes into the Pentagon, the headquarters of America's military, in Washington, D.C.

10:05 a.m. The south tower of the World Trade Center collapses.

10:10 a.m. A fourth hijacked passenger jet crashes in a field outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

10:10 a.m. A portion of the Pentagon collapses.

10:28 a.m. The north tower of the World Trade Center collapses.

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Lesson 1: What Is Justice? What Is the Injustice Here?

Handout B: Reports of Incidents Following the Terrorist Attack

Some Actions

"Vandals fired at least six bullets through windows of the Islamic Center of Irvine [Texas]."[1]

"In Chicago, a Molotov cocktail was tossed Wednesday [September 12, 2001] at an Arab-American community center."[2]

On Wednesday, September 12, a Mosque in Lynnwood, Washington, is vandalized.[3]

A Christian from Sudan was assaulted in New York City by a knife-wielding assailant.[4]

A bus carrying Muslim children is stoned in Australia.[5]

The Islamic center in Bellevue, Washington, received calls suggesting that Muslims be interned, as Japanese citizens and Japanese Americans were during World War II.[6]

Some Reactions

"I haven't left the house in two days," says Husam Jamoum, a Mariettta [Georgia] resident of Palestinian descent. "I don't want to be forced into a situation where I have to defend myself."[7]

"The Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group, urged Muslims who wear traditional dress to consider staying out of public areas."[8]

"The Fall River Police Association issued a statement urging citizens to band together: 'Following Tuesday's attacks, there have been local reports of people retaliating against innocent Arab Americans living in our community. . . . Let's not fight evil with evil. . . . We are one city, and we need to stand together.'"[9]

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Lesson 2: Has the Past Been Just?

Handout C: In Another Time

Background
In the United States and its territories in the 1880s, there was a large demand for cheap labor. People from Asian countries were brought over to fill the jobs. By 1908, 135,000 Japanese had arrived. In the years that followed, many of them saved whatever money they could, brought their families over, and made America their home.

On December 7, 1941, as World War II was raging in Europe, the country of Japan attacked the U.S. military base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Newspaper headlines all over America quoted the president's reaction: "DAY OF INFAMY!!!" Following the attack, the United States declared war on Japan.

In their rage and fear, people turned against Americans of Japanese descent and their entire community. It was feared that those living on the West Coast would help Japan by signaling military or industrial locations and otherwise try to sabotage America's war effort. According to one Congressman:

> I know the Hawaiian Islands. I know the Pacific Coast ...I know that those areas are teeming with Japanese spies.
>
> Do not forget that once a Japanese, always a Japanese. I say it is of vital importance that we get rid of every Japanese, whether in Hawaii or on the mainland ... [Japanese] who had been there [Hawaii] for generations were making signs, if you please, guiding the Japanese planes ...in order that they might destroy our naval vessels, murder our soldiers and sailors, and blow to pieces the helpless women and children of Hawaii ...[10]

The Evacuation
On February 19, 1942, the president signed an Executive Order authorizing the U.S. government to force Japanese Americans and legal residents from their homes and into internment camps. Approximately 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, mainly those living on the West Coast, were put into these internment camps.* The vast majority of these people were U.S. citizens or legal residents; half of them were children. They were moved away from coastal areas and into facilities that the president himself called "concentration camps."

A week's notice was given for the move. A daughter of a family forced to leave Seattle wrote about what the final week was like:

> Up to that moment we had hoped against hope that something or someone would intervene for us. Now there was no time for moaning. A thousand and one details must be attended to in this one week of grace. Those seven days sputtered out like matches struck in the wind, as we rushed wildly about. Mother distributed sheets, pillowcases and blankets, which we stuffed into seabags. Into the two suitcases we packed heavy winter overcoats, plenty of sweaters, woolen slacks and skirts, flannel pajamas and scarves.

*Approximately two-thirds of the internees were born as U.S. citizens and one-third were foreign-born U.S. nationals. The first generation of Japanese immigrants are often referred to as "Issei," their children as "Nisei," and their grandchildren as "Sansei."

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Personal toilet articles, one tin plate, tin cup and silverware completed our luggage. The one seabag and two suitcases apiece were going to be the backbone of our future home, and we planned it carefully.

Henry went to the Control Station to register the family. He came home with twenty tags, all numbered "10710," tags to be attached to each piece of baggage, and one to hang from our coat lapels. From then on, we were known as Family #10710.[11]

An aid worker wrote his observations:

Think what these people have been doing: the past week standing in line, first to register, then for physical exams. The last frantic arrangements, selling, storing dispensing with precious possessions, leaving pets and gardens behind, then the last night, most of them up until 4 and 5 a.m. ... Then at 6 or so, up and get the children ready, dress in your best clothes, come down in the puring *[sic]* rain of a cold, dreary day, then stand in line and mill around in the confusion of departure... then load into the buses ...[12]

Government officials checking Japanese-Americans into an internment camp in 1943. Photo by Lee Russell.

The Camps

The Seattle daughter who earlier described her family's evacuation preparations describes here what the family found as living quarters when they arrived:

We were assigned to apartment 2-1-A ...The apartments resembled elongated, low stables ... Our home was one room, about 18 by 20 feet, the size of a living room. There was one small window in the wall opposite the door. It was bare except for a small, tinny, wood-burning stove crouching in the center. The flooring consisted of two-by-fours laid directly on the earth, and dandelions were already pushing up ...[13]

The tents where the Japanese-Americans lived at one of the camps. Photo by Lee Russell.

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Another resident describes the lavatories:

> "The lavatories were an 'open' affair at first with not a sign or partition anywhere, back or sides—merely holes in the seat with a cover—that's all. Now, though, the partitions between every two seats and the board behind our backs afford some degree of privacy, but the odor—oh my!"[14]

A national magazine published this description of the camp environment:

> "The resettlement center is actually a penitentiary—armed guards in towers with spotlights and deadly tommy guns, fifteen feet of barbed-wire fences, everyone confined to quarters at nine, lights out at ten o'clock. The guards are ordered to shoot anyone who approaches within twenty feet of the fences. No one is allowed to take the two-block long hike to the latrines after nine, under any circumstances."[15]

A woman sets up a kitchen in her barracks apartment. Photo by Lee Russell.

The Impact on Japanese Businesses and Farms

A farmer who was about to be evacuated wrote this letter:

> John H. Tolan Committee
> Henry Building, Seattle, Wash.
>
> Dear Sirs: I am one of the Japanese Americans being eventually evacuated from this area and desire information as to the disposition of property we own …
>
> Our family have a greenhouse business here, owned by myself, in which we have planted the tomato and cucumber crops and have tended and cared for these crops right up to the present time. We did so in the hope that Japanese, if citizens of the United States, would be permitted to remain if approved by the authorities to be loyal to this country. However, we find we may be evacuated also.
>
> These crops will be ready to harvest beginning next month, and, in the event I have to leave, I want very much that someone handle it rather than lose the crops.
>
> Thanking you for the favor, I am
> Yours very sincerely,
> T. Nakamura[16]

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The following report appeared in *The San Francisco News* on March 28, 1942:

> Unless American farmers immediately take over 225,000 acres of Japanese and Japanese American farmlands, crop losses running into millions of dollars are threatened, L. I. Hewes Jr., regional director of the Farm Security Administration, warned today.
>
> "It is mandatory [that] the land be kept in production," said Mr. Hewes. "Losses are already occurring, and within the next four to six months heavy losses threaten such crops as tomatoes, celery, spinach, peas, onions, garlic and snap beans. The poultry business is suffering, too."
>
> Acting through the Army's Wartime Civilian Control Administration, nearly 6,000 farms formerly held by Japanese have been listed as available for farming by Americans. But so far only about 1,000 farmers have expressed interest in operating the lands. The Japanese farms are worth nearly 70 million dollars, not counting crop values.

Letters to a Teacher

Before being evacuated, students wrote messages to their teacher in an autograph book:

March 20, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I will start out my letter by writing about the worst thing. I do not want to go away but the government says we all have to go so we have to mind him. I said in the Japanese paper that we have to go east of the cascade mt. But we were planning to go to Idaho or Montana.

Now that war is going on many Japanese men, women and girls are out of jobs and a lot of my friends father are in a consertration *[sic]* camp. If I go there I hope I will have a teacher just like you. And rather more I hope the war will be strighten *[sic]* out very soon so that I would be able to attend Washington School.

May 23, 1942

Dear Miss Evanson,

I am sorry we have to evacuate because I will miss my studies, teachers, friends and our principal, Mr. Sears.

Maybe it is better for us to go and do what the government says. I hope there is a school where I can continue with my studies.

As you know Seattle is my home town so I am sorry to leave here. I hope this war will soon be over because then I could come back to attend the Dear Old Washington School.[17]

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Hype and Propaganda
In 1942, a movie was made about the Japanese in America:

The movie *Little Tokyo, U.S.A.* is released by Twentieth Century Fox. In it, the Japanese American community is portrayed as a "vast army of volunteer spies" and "blind worshippers of their Emperor," as described in the film's voice-over prologue.[18]

Japanese Americans in the Army
February 1, 1943
The 442nd Regimental Combat Team is activated, made up entirely of Japanese Americans.[19]

October 27–30, 1944
The 442nd Regimental Combat Team rescues an American battalion, which had been cut off and surrounded by the enemy. Eight hundred casualties are suffered by the 442nd to rescue 211 men. After this rescue, the 442nd is ordered to keep advancing in the forest; ultimately, they push ahead without relief or rest until November 9.[20]

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Lesson 2: Has the Past Been Just?

Handout D: People Who Helped

While Japanese Americans faced a sea of troubles during this time period, a few individuals and organizations did offer help. Here are some examples:[21]

- During the internment of Japanese Americans, a group of religious, academic, and civic leaders came together to form the "National Japanese American Student Relocation Council" in order to assist students in completing their education. Their help included providing sponsorships, scholarships, food, housing, and even jobs.

- In 1942, both the mayor and the chief of police of Lincoln, Nebraska, wrote letters supporting the rights and citizenship of Japanese Americans. These letters laid the foundation that allowed these citizens to become students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and to be released from the internment camp.

- Reverend Drew, a Methodist minister, was an outspoken pacifist and activist for the rights of Japanese American citizens. He supported efforts to move families to the Midwest, often providing them with food and shelter.

- Beet farmers in Idaho offered Japanese Americans the work opportunities that could serve as a basis for release from internment. Other farmers gave land to Japanese Americans in exchange for work to support those who were evacuated from the West Coast.

- Many members of the American Society of Friends (sometimes referred to as Quakers) protested the internment program and provided academic counseling and support, housing, and shelter to Japanese American students to help them continue their studies.

- In several communities in the Midwest, informal social groups were created for cultural exchange in order to help Japanese Americans become socially accepted.

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Lesson 2: Has the Past Been Just?

Handout E: Epilogue

What was the impact on the Japanese Americans?
Injustice is powerful, and its effects can be felt for years:

> "The mental and physical health impacts of the trauma of the internment experience continue to affect tens of thousands of Japanese Americans. Health studies have shown a two-times greater incidence of heart disease and premature death among former internees, compared to non-interned Japanese Americans."[22]

California legislator Mike Honda remembers his confusion and his sense of helplessness:

> "When I was a child, my family was rounded up and sent to an internment camp. Was my family a threat? Were the 120,000 Japanese Americans a threat? The answer is no."[23]

What is the United States' view today about the Japanese internment?
Almost 50 years later, through the efforts of leaders of and advocates for the Japanese American community, Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 . . . [It] acknowledged that "a grave injustice was done" and mandated Congress to pay each victim of internment $20,000 in reparations.

The reparations were sent with a signed apology from the president of the United States on behalf of the American people.

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Lesson 3: How Can You Prevent Injustice?

Handout F: Not Allowed / Not Cool / Cool

The following is a list of possible individual responses to terrorism or acts of violence. Some acts are harmful and against the law. Some are legal but potentially harmful. Others are helpful—and hopeful.

Take a few moments to look at these lists. As you read them, think about which actions you have witnessed, experienced, or done yourself.

What is NOT ALLOWED:
Regardless of your personal feelings about a person or a group of people, the following acts are against the law in the United States:

- Killing, harming, or threatening someone because of his or her race, religion, skin color, or nationality
- Harassment: inappropriate, unwanted behavior that disturbs someone and makes that person *afraid for his or her safety*, including threatening comments, letters, phone calls, or e-mail messages
- Destruction of property: defacing or destroying homes, cars, centers of worship, public or private buildings, books, lockers, etc.

Have any of these things ever happened to you? ___ yes ___no ___don't know

Have you ever witnessed acts like these? ___ yes ___no ___don't know

Have you ever done any of these things yourself? ___ yes ___no ___don't know

What is NOT COOL:
Freedom of speech is protected in our country and is a foundation of our democracy. However, just because something is legal doesn't necessarily mean it is okay, or that it contributes to the greater good:

- Judging people on how they look or dress
- Assuming that someone holds certain beliefs or attitudes based on the way he or she looks
- Stereotyping people because they belong to a certain racial, ethnic, national, or religious background
- Blaming innocent people for the actions of others
- Lashing out verbally at people who are different from you or who you don't understand
- Making prejudiced comments or jokes about groups or individuals
- Verbal violence, including slurs, name calling, and insults
- Making obscene gestures
- Celebrating the death or injury of innocent people
- Drawing or writing hateful symbols or words on your personal property

Add your own ideas here:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Have any of these things ever happened to you? ___ yes ___no ___don't know

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Have you ever witnessed acts like these? ___ yes ___no ___don't know

Have you ever done any of these things yourself? ___ yes ___no ___don't know

What is COOL:

Many young people react to violence in constructive ways that promote understanding and support potential victims:

- Talking about how it feels to be a victim of violence or prejudice
- Reaching out to victims to show your support
- Thinking before you speak or act, especially when you are angry or when your comments might hurt someone
- Having honest discussions about cultural differences in order to learn about one another
- Making a vow to avoid making racist or prejudiced comments
- Responding to peers when they make prejudiced comments, explaining why it bothers you and how it hurts others
- Teaching your friends and siblings what you have learned about the dangers of blaming or punishing an entire group based on the actions of a few
- Examining how television, music, newspapers, Web sites, chat rooms, and bulletin boards discuss blame or add to stereotypes
- Supporting and protecting victims, or potential victims, of hate-motivated violence, harassment, or discrimination

Add your own ideas here:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Have you ever witnessed acts like these? ___ yes ___no ___don't know

Have you ever done any of these things yourself? ___ yes ___no ___don't know

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Endnotes

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